

NCC Minutes 11/20/06

Open meeting: 7:05 p.m.

Present: D. Mason, L. Hill, B. Byrnes, R. Konisky, R. LaBranche, Alt. Steve Shope, Sel. W. Moore, Guest M. West

1) Ongoing Administrative Business:

- a. Treasurer's Report: read by D. Mason, motion to accept B. Byrne, seconded by R. LaBranche, all in favor YES.
- b. Minutes 10/16/06: D. Mason motions to accept as amended, B. Byrne seconds, all in favor YES.

2) Prime Wetlands: Mark West- Reviewing Wetland Evaluation Report

- a) Mark notes that in the State Conservation Plan for Coastal Water a large portion of Newfields has been designated as critical habitat. The Piscassic and Swamscott rivers are of primary importance as they have not yet been degraded.
- b) Some landowners from the town were present to express their concern that the Prime Wetlands designation will affect their ability to develop their land and this may cause a decrease in value. Mark explained that wetland buffers remain under local control. The Prime designation results in greater oversight by the state regarding potential impacts on those wetlands (i.e. requiring better planning, mitigation, etc.). He feels that ultimately it increases the value of land in Newfields by preserving our fresh water sources, better flood control, etc. Another question was whether there would be further restrictions on dealing with beaver dams and he replied no. It was also noted that there will be 1 or 2 public hearings held before this is brought to a town vote.
- c) Overview of his methodology- boundaries have been drawn on aerial maps. G.I.S. mapping is the next step.
 - Reviewed functions and values- i.e. Flood Flow alteration
 - Discussed a few differences between his criteria and the state's i.e. he did not consider fisheries, he feels restoration potential should be considered, etc.
 - Method for Ranking
 - Total score= (acreage X # of principle functions) + # of wetland values
 - He then multiplied the scores of the tidal wetlands by 2 due to their increased value to the state. The higher the score the higher the wetlands rank. Three tiers of wetlands emerged.

(2)

- Method of ranking (cont.)

Tier 1 = 11 of the largest wetlands comprising 78% of the total wetlands acreage. All scored > 150

Tier 2 = 11 wetlands with scores of 50-150. They are smaller but very diverse and high functioning including a small tidal wetland. These need to be included because of potential affects on the Piscassic and Swamscott rivers.

Tier 3 = 23 smaller wetlands with limited function. Some would not qualify as prime. Some are vernal pools that may provide habitat for Spotted and Blandings turtles so we may want to address this at a later time.

In conclusion, Mark recommends that we try to designate wetlands in Tiers 1 and 2 as prime. He also notes 27 and 28 and/or 10 and 13 could be combined as they are contiguous.

d) General Discussion

- R. Konisky requests that Mark provide an example of how he calculates the rank for the public hearing and also discuss what other towns have done. We also need to clarify what the existing town wetland buffers are. Areas we are recommending need to be highlighted on the map for the public hearing. We should have a digitized map at that point.
- M. West feels that Tiers 1 and 2 are highly defensible and should be accepted at the state level.
- He also noted that if we want to pursue local or state regulation of vernal pools, we need to survey each of them. We should also pursue wetlands restoration projects (i.e. phragmites next to septic, etc.). Also may need to review, possibly revise, existing local wetland ordinances.
- R. Konisky asked for clarification as to whether prime designation adds restrictions. M. West replied that the state has not set any, just that there will be more scrutiny at the state level.
- R. Konisky motions to accept M. West's recommendations to try to designate Tier 1 and 2 wetlands, seconded by B. Byrnes, all in favor YES.

3) Bills

- a) West Environmental- 10/30/06 \$3766.30
11/15/06 \$2,868.00

Total to date including these bills is \$18,299 out of \$30,000 budgeted.

R. Konisky motions to pay, B. Byrnes seconds, all in favor YES.

- b) F. Lane- 11/3/06 \$1345.80 for work on Cole Prop., Selectman need to review.

4) Next meeting 12/18/06

3)

- 5) Public Hearing on Prime Wetlands set for 12/14/06- B. Byrnes feels we should meet again before this. D. Mason will discuss with A. Watts.

Adjourn 9:25 p.m.

NCC member L. Hill 11/20/06

